

# Information on the Technical Project for the Certification Examination

The following provides information about creating a technical project for certification as a Technical Communicator at the Expert Level.

## 1. Task

For the technical project at the Expert Level, you must:

- a) Submit an information product (technical documentation).
- b) Create and submit a reflection on the information product.

By creating a technical project (information product and reflection), you should demonstrate and show that you have the competence to:

- Work independently within the activity parameters of work or learning contexts, which are usually known, but can change.
- Be able to take responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work activities.
- Be able to apply and transfer theoretical knowledge and methodological skills to specific work tasks.

## 2. Objectives of the Technical Project

For certification as a technical communicator at the Expert Level, you will create a technical project consisting of an information product on which you have collaborated to a significant extent, and a written reflection on this technical project. You will defend these in an oral examination before the examiner panel.

Your project work will be graded with 2 grades: One for your oral defense, and one for the submitted technical project – the information project plus the reflection on it. Both grades will appear in your certification report.

With the technical project, you should:

- Demonstrate with the submitted information product that you are able to implement the knowledge you have acquired in practice.
- Show with the submitted information product that you are able to develop a concept and a methodical process, implement them in an information product and substantiate your process and decisions in the reflection on this product.
- Demonstrate with the reflection that you can evaluate the information products at hand, are capable of reflecting on which methodological approaches and solutions were used, and can critically scrutinize their implementation.

- Show with the reflection that you know all the important aspects of the creation process, and take them into consideration in the evaluation.
- Provide the certification examiner important information on the general conditions and development conditions of the information product with the reflection, so that the examiner can evaluate them appropriately. Information, e.g. about the use of the system or incontrovertible specifications of the organization.
- Show with the reflection that you are able to present all relevant aspects of the development of the submitted information product briefly, concisely and comprehensibly, so that the maximum length, as mentioned subsequently, is observed.
- Demonstrate with the reflection that you can create structured, meaningfully organized documentation with proper grammar and spelling that has logical content and is comprehensible.

### 3. Requirements for the Technical Project

Your technical project should fulfill the following requirements in general:

- Logical and consistent structure
- Factual and substantive accuracy
- Language appropriate for the target group, correct with respect to language (spelling, grammar, wording, etc.)
- Attractive and consistently applied layout

#### a) Requirements for the Information Product

The technical project is permissible as work for the examination when the submitted information product fulfills the criteria of the following definition:

An information product is a document that contains a mostly technical and application-oriented description of a product. It conveys technical know-how and makes the historical information of the product available to the following users of the information (whether developers or users, patent or state attorneys with focus on product liability).

An information product:

- Carries information directed in purpose to a special target group.
- Contains information related to application and usage and/or technical or product-related data and/or functional descriptions, which are used and saved for various purposes.
- Can be used within the organization or beyond the organization.

All documents emerging during the entire product lifecycle are an information product in this sense. The various purposes of the information products are, for example:

- Information about the product: Product definition and product specification, product representation, technical and detailed concepts, specifications, and quality and production guidelines
- Information on design, production, quality assurance, product liability
- Description of functions and interfaces
- Technical sales information: technical image brochures or films, marketing material
- Instructional texts, standard operating procedures, and user manuals for safe and correct use as intended
- Maintenance instructions: Service and maintenance manuals
- Product trainings: Training documents, tutorials or web-based trainings, operating manuals, safety guidelines
- Instructions for maintenance and repair of a technical product as well as safe disposal

The information product can be created using various media:

- Paper / PDF
- Websites
- Instructional films
- Apps
- ...

Thus, all technical documents to which said definition applies can be submitted as an information product. It is necessary to ensure for the submission, particularly when using a technical medium for display, that the certification examiners can open and read the information product without problems. No minimum length is defined for the information product.

## **b) Requirements for the Reflection**

A written reflection must be submitted for the information product as an accompanying document. The same requirements apply to the reflection as the information product, because the reflection is also documentation even though it documents how the information product was developed.

The reflection on the information product must correspond to the following definition: By substantiating, explaining, critically reviewing, and debating on the information product in the reflection, you should show that you are able to apply technical knowledge and methodological know-how to an information product in a specific case. Reflection means a scrutinizing and comparative contemplation and includes the justification of an issue.

To be able to assess a technical project, it is important that the reflection presents the general conditions and developmental conditions as well as the concepts on which the project is based and

the methodology applied. The written reflection should refer to the background for creating the information product:

It explains and justifies why this information product is so designed, e.g.:

- Target group, e.g. technical personnel
- Methodological approaches, e.g. structuring methods
- Quality criteria, e.g. consistent terminology
- External general conditions, e.g. sales channels
- Internal general conditions, e.g. company specifications, specifications of corporate identity
- Product-related conditions, e.g. product packaging, product sizes
- Project-related conditions, e.g. time, system used

In addition, the reflection can critically question and evaluate, with justification:

- Good practices: What is good about the information product? And why?
- Vulnerabilities: What can be improved, why and how for example?

The certification candidate can also use the reflection to show what he would have done differently technically or organizationally, if he had had the opportunity, or why a conspicuous solution is appropriate in this particular case.

A reflection must never be or contain:

- An experience report
- A substantive summary of technical documentation
- A project or development report in the form of a diary
- A mere replay of basic knowledge from the field of technical communication

#### **Important information:**

- The written reflection must contain a true and verifiable account with respect to the tasks and scope of your independent contribution to the creation of the information product.

## **4. Length of the Work**

The written reflection must be at least 15 pages in length and contain a maximum of 20 pages (at 2000 characters per page).

## **5. Chapters and Contents of the Reflection**

The following arrangement of chapters could be used for the reflection. An average of 3-4 pages can be written per chapter for a maximum length of 20 pages for the reflection.

The necessary declaration about independent composition is not included in the overall length.

## 1. Declaration

You must submit the following declaration with your reflection:

"I confirm that I have composed this written reflection independently and have not used any other tools or sources apart from those that have been mentioned. All sources that I have used have been disclosed in the text and listed in the bibliography. All quotes are provided with quotation marks and all necessary bibliographical source details. I have mentioned all sources from the internet with the URL and date of access. I have truthfully represented in the written reflection the scope of my independent contribution to the creation of the information product."

If this declaration is missing, the certification exam shall be considered not passed.

## 2. Type of information product

- a) Documented product (e.g. is an entire product described or only parts of it, e.g. a machine within a plant?)
- b) Type of information product (e.g. does it concern internal or external documentation? What is the function of the information product? Is it a training document or an operating manual etc.?)
- c) Documented information related to the product life cycle (e.g. does the information product contain information only for a specific phase of the product lifecycle, e.g. only for maintenance or is the information for various phases provided?)
- d) Target group(s) (e.g. was a target group analysis conducted, and are specific prerequisites or characteristics known? What is known for certain about the prerequisites for the target group and what is assumed?)

## 3. General conditions for the information product, e.g.

- a) Processes, e.g. modularized creation processes, single source, component content management (e.g. was the information product created in modular form?)
- b) Normative requirements (e.g. does the information product have to fulfill certain standards?)
- c) Specifications from the company – technical writing guidelines (e.g. is it necessary to consider specifications from the CI or technical writing guidelines?)
- d) Publication media (e.g. is the information product published in only one medium or in various media? Are electronic media used?)
- e) International requirements and languages (e.g. do special regional or cultural requirements need to be considered due to international distribution of the information product?)

## 4. Creation process

- a) Tasks and objectives of the process (e.g. why was the project required and what objectives did it follow?)

- b) Processes, e.g. modularized creation processes, single source, component content management (e.g. was the information product created in modular form?)
  - c) Type of processing (e.g. what was the documentation project dealing with, a new creation, update, design review or other process?)
  - d) Timeframe (e.g. how much time was available for the project?)
  - e) Your own contribution (e.g. which task was processed in what scope?)
  - f) Systems used for the creation (e.g. which systems could be used to work on the project?)
5. Conceptualization and methodological approaches
- a) Conceptual approach (e.g. according to what principles is the information product structured, e.g. function-oriented, use case-oriented)
  - b) Organization, layout and structure of the information product (e.g. how is the target group supported by the structure in using the information product?)
  - c) Directories and navigation (e.g. how can the user search specifically for information?)
  - d) Information content (e.g. what information must the information product contain, and how is it prepared substantively for the target group, e.g. text, illustrations?)
  - e) The information categories or types used (e.g. step-by-step instructions, use cases, hazard warnings, technical product data, functional descriptions, troubleshooting instructions)
  - f) Media-related design (e.g. how does the external form and design of the information product support the use of the product by the target group?)
  - g) Standardization (e.g. which structuring methods were applied?)
  - h) Language rules and specifications (e.g. what are the specifications related to language standardization, terminology, hazard warnings?)
6. Special features or miscellaneous points
7. Reflective evaluation
- a) Difficulties during creation
  - b) What was solved well?
  - c) What can be improved?

### **Evaluation of the Technical Project**

The information product is assessed under consideration of the background information from the reflection based on previously defined evaluation criteria. The reflection itself is evaluated according to a list of evaluation criteria as well.

The authorized examiners for the evaluation of the technical project are the same as those conducting the oral technical examination for the specific certification candidate.

## 6. Preparation and Submission of the Technical Project

Along with your application for approval for certification, you must submit suggestions for an information product that you would like to work on for the technical project, as well as a short description of the task and your own contribution to the scope.

You can also submit information products that have already been created. In this case, it is necessary to note in the application when the information product was created. Work on which you have only partly collaborated can also be permitted. In this case, however, the scope, contents and tasks that you had during the creation must be represented explicitly, specifically and in a verifiable manner in the application and reflection. Moreover, notes on the conditions of development are recommended.

The topic shall be reviewed and approved by the chairperson of the examination committee upon application for approval. The technical project (information product and reflection) must be submitted in paper form as well as a copy in electronic form for archiving. If a digital medium is used for the information product, excerpts of same must be submitted in paper form. For a project in electronic form, it is also assumed that the work can be assessed by the authorized examiners with a reasonable amount of effort.

Certification candidates shall be informed of the authorization and approval of the topic submitted for the technical project by, at the latest, 3.75 months before the date of the oral examination.

The submission date will be communicated to you in writing with the confirmation of approval. Depending on the date of the examination (taking weekends and holidays into account), this would be approx. three weeks before the date of the oral examination.

The completed technical project must reach tekcom on the given submission date. The stamp of receipt applies. If the technical project is not received by tekcom on the date given with the confirmation of approval, the certification examination shall be considered not passed.